

Promising Practices for Goal Two: School Completion
The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

For Goal Two, the National Education Goals Panel focused on the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who have high school credentials.

In 1997, 85 percent of this group nationwide had high school credentials. Seventeen states met the goal of having a 90 percent or higher state average. The National Education Goals Panel reported efforts in the following two states for the high percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds who received a high school diploma or alternative certificates.

New Jersey is one of the nation's 17 top-performing states for high school completion. In 1997, 92 percent of the state's 18- to 24-year-olds had high school credentials. The state attributes their success to four strategies:

- **Alternative education programs:** In 1998, the New Jersey Department of Education devoted \$1.2 million towards developing or expanding alternative education programs. The program also works to prevent teen pregnancies and truancy. In one district, each secondary school must appoint a dropout prevention specialist and a coordinator of health and social services.
- **School-to-career programs:** Tech-prep programs are an essential component of school-to-career efforts. The number of students enrolled in these programs increased from 5,000 to 21,183 between 1993 and 1998. New Jersey was awarded a \$37 million, five-year federal grant to implement school-based, work-based and transitional activities through local partnerships.
- **Workplace Readiness Standards:** These standards help students develop skills for the work world or postsecondary education.
- **Service learning opportunities:** In AmeriCorps, corps members provide tutoring and mentoring to younger students in 12 urban schools. ParentCorps has helped more than 200 teen parents stay in school by providing parenting classes, day care and links to needed services in 12 schools.

In **Hawaii**, 92 percent of its 18- to 24-year-olds also possess high school credentials.

- A compulsory education law requires students to stay in school until age 18.
- The state has maintained a priority on education spending, despite a downturn in its economy.
- Through the Comprehensive Student Support System, each school identifies and provides support for students who need extra help.
- Due to the high cost of living, state residents believe that they need a good education in order to survive.

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